

United States Senate

May 10th, 2023

The Honorable Gina Raimondo
Secretary of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

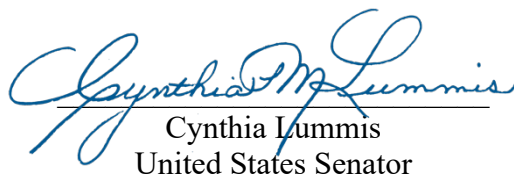
Dear Secretary Raimondo,

I write to express my concerns regarding the eligibility requirements for the Regional Technology and Innovation Hub (Tech Hubs) Program published by the Economic Development Administration (EDA).¹ As it was originally envisioned by Congress, the Tech Hubs program was designed to promote US technological leadership through investments in consortia of public and private stakeholders across all regions of the country. Congress recognized that the capacity for innovation exists in every state, and that unlocking this innovation is key to US technological leadership. To reflect this, the text of the CHIPS and Science Act defines promoting geographic diversity of innovation as a criterion for designating Tech Hubs.² At multiple points, the statute also calls for EDA to include small cities and rural areas.

It was therefore disappointing to see the EDA restrict the geography of a Tech Hub to a single Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). By defining the eligibility criteria in this way, the EDA is putting rural areas at a disadvantage when competing for Tech Hubs. In western states such as Wyoming, the members of potential consortia are spread further apart and often lie outside of a single MSA. Stakeholders with complementary expertise and innovative capacity may even lie across state lines. By restricting the geography of Tech Hubs to a single MSA, the EDA excludes these types of consortia from the Tech Hubs program. By not allowing rural states to leverage their unique strengths, the EDA is putting rural areas at a disadvantage.

When the CHIPS and Science Act was being written, I negotiated in conjunction with Senators Tester and Thune to include language that recognizes the unique value of rural states to US innovation and technological leadership. I urge you to recognize this intent by reconsidering your definition of a Tech Hub's geography such that rural states can compete on an even playing field.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Lummis
United States Senator

¹ <https://www.eda.gov/news/blog/2023/04/14/look-tech-hubs-fact-sheet-what-you-need-know-get-ready-apply-tech-hubs>

² 15 USC 3722a